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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2012 Volume I: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Consumer Culture

Present, Past, and Future: Using a Consumer Lens to Help Students Envision a Future

Guide for Curriculum Unit 12.01.07, published September 2012
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How does our understanding of the consumer history and consumer geography of a place inform our beliefs and vision for its future? This local history/geography unit is focused on one neighborhood in Chicago but can be applied, in form, to your city and your neighborhood. In part one, students will examine their preconceptions of the neighborhood while competing in a local speech competition. In part two, students will map various consumer aspects of the neighborhood—housing stock, retail/services, transportation, and schools—and examine primary and secondary sources to be able to tell how and why the neighborhood has changed over time. They will then use this contextual understanding to research and present ideas for working with existing institutions to promote change from within.

(Developed for AP Human Geography, grades 9-12; recommended for Human Geography, grades 9-12; U. S. History, grade 10; and Sociology, grades 11-12)

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